

SHED, JAMES

DRAWER 10B

CABINET

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# Abraham Lincoln's Cabinet

James Speed

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

## **Mrs. Elizabeth Speed Dies at Camp Lewis**

Word was received here yesterday of the death Wednesday of Mrs. Elizabeth Goodwin Speed at Camp Lewis, Washington, following a brief illness, from her son, Captain D. M. Speed stationed at that post. Pneumonia, which attacked her suddenly, caused her death. She was the wife of L. M. Speed, who was in charge of railway reconnaissance on certain transcontinental lines and whose father was U. S. Attorney in Abraham Lincoln's cabinet. She also leaves three sons, one of whom is Captain Speed and also T. F. Speed and Preston Speed. Mrs. Speed lived in the valley for a number of years and was well known in the vicinity. *James A. Parker*

12-31-20

# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
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FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

August 18, 1947

## JAMES SPEED - ATTORNEY GENERAL

When Joshua Speed invited Abraham Lincoln to share his room over the Speed store at Springfield, Illinois, in 1837 he opened the way for a friendship which eventually contributed to the selection of Speed's brother James as Attorney General of the United States. It was through Lincoln's friendship for Joshua that he first met James Speed in 1841. Lincoln was on a visit to Joshua Speed in Louisville, Kentucky, where he met the members of the Speed family. James Speed, in an address on Lincoln, said:

"I knew Mr. Lincoln when he visited Kentucky, twenty years before he came to the Presidency. He then showed he was no ordinary man. I saw him daily; he sat in my office, read my books, and talked with me about his life, his reading, his studies, his aspirations. He made a decided impression upon all. He had an intelligent, vigorous, mind, strong in grasp, and original. He was earnest, frank, manly and sincere in every thought and expression. The artificial was all wanting. He had natural force and natural refinement. His after-life was a continuous development of his youthful promise."

Lincoln's visit in the highly cultural home of Judge John Speed was a far cry from the one room cabin which he had left when he migrated from the state with his parents twenty-five years before. Possibly the outstanding character in the home was the wife of the Judge, Lucy G. Speed, the mother of Joshua and James. On October 3, 1861 Abraham Lincoln sent her his photograph with the inscription, "For Mrs. Lucy G. Speed from whose pious hand I accepted the present of an Oxford Bible twenty years ago."

Upon the resignation of Bates, the Attorney General, it seemed almost certain, for expediency sake at least, that a man from the South would have to be selected to fill his place. Apparently Lincoln's first choice was Judge Joseph Holt also a Kentuckian, a former member of Buchanan's cabinet whom Lincoln had appointed in 1861 Judge Advocate General of the Army, and later Lincoln had made him head of the Bureau of Military Justice. Judge Holt however refused to accept the appointment of attorney general, but he did recommend highly James Speed. He said:

"I can recall no public man in the State, (Kentucky) of uncompromising loyalty, who unites in the same degree the qualifications of professional at-

tainments, fervent devotion to the Union and to the principles of your Administration, and spotless purity of personal character. To these he adds —what I should deem indispensable—a warm and hearty friendship for yourself, personally and officially."

### JAMES SPEED

Born, Louisville, Kentucky, March 12, 1812

Completed course at St. Joseph College, 1828

Graduated from Law Department Transylvania University, 1838

Practiced Law at Louisville, Kentucky  
Served Term in General Council City  
at Louisville

Member Lower House of Kentucky  
Legislature, 1847-1849

Contributed several articles to the  
press in 1849 against importation  
of slaves

Member of the Kentucky Senate, 1861-  
1863

Favored Lincoln's Compensation  
Emancipation Plan

Mustering Officer for Kentucky, 1861  
Exerted tremendous influence in keeping  
Kentucky in the Union

Entered Cabinet of Abraham Lincoln,  
1864

While we would not imply that James Speed was not qualified for the high office he was to occupy it was undoubtedly friendship for the Speed family which was primarily responsible for Lincoln's inviting Speed to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Bates. This was apparently Lincoln's only cabinet appointment where friendship was a major factor in the selection of a member of the official family.

The outstanding personality of James Speed's mother is indicated by the place she occupied in the lives of her sons even after they had become men of prominence. Upon being invited to a place in the Cabinet James Speed wrote to his mother from Washington. Washington, Dec. 5, 1864: "Dear Mother

"I have seen the President this morning and consented to take the office tendered, in the event my nomination is confirmed by the Senate."

Mr. Speed may have had some inkling that his confirmation as attorney general might not be passed immediately, in fact it was held up several days. According to Noah Brooks the delay was purposely caused to impress Lincoln on the obscurity of the man he was nominating. The public inauguration of Chase as Chief Justice was also delayed as the Attorney General's signature was needed on documents necessary to complete the induction. The confirmation was finally made however.

On January 15, 1865 Speed wrote his mother that he had attended "two great dinners . . . we had nothing at either dinner as good as jowl and turnip greens, or pig's head and hominy . . . On looking around at the gentlemen I found them all dressed in swallow-tailed coats, except myself, and nicely fixed up at all points from head to heel. I looked upon it as a mere conventionality of which I had not been apprised and so thought no more of it."

It was also to his mother that he wrote this reaction towards the security of the nation at the time of the President's assassination. His note bears the date of April 17. He said in part.

"The best and greatest man I ever knew, and one holding just now the highest and most responsible position on earth has been taken from us, but do not be downcast and hopeless. This great government was not bound up in the life of any one man. The great and true principles of self-government will under God be worked out by us or by better men."

On the very last public occasion which James Speed attended but a month before his death he read a paper before the Society of the Loyal Legion of Cincinnati. In the introduction of this address he paid a brief tribute to Lincoln which seems appropriate to use here.

"I believe that in all the annals of our race Abraham Lincoln is the finest example of an unknown man rising from obscurity and ascending to the loftiest heights of human grandeur."

## In the 1840s, Bardstown Was Only 5 Hours Away

**Lincoln may have made the trip; in Louisville, he visited offices of his Attorney General-to-be**

By MELVILLE O. BRINEY

*The second of a series on Louisville as it was at the time of Lincoln's visit here.*

LAST WEEK, I mentioned in this column that Joshua Speed may have taken his friend, Abraham Lincoln, to Bardstown. Travel, in 1841, over the new turnpike had become an exceedingly speedy affair, and coaches were then ripping along Bardstown Road at an eight-mile-an-hour clip. You could make it from Bardstown to Louisville in about five hours, taking time out to pay your toll at the gate which stood where the Baxter Avenue Station is today.

We know that Lincoln came from "Farmington," the Speed home, to Louisville and saw the sights. Joshua Speed's older brother, James, was a promising young attorney here, and, in partnership with Henry Pirtle, had hung out his shingle on Centre Street between Jefferson and Green. Here Lincoln pored over the law books of the young man who would one day serve in his Cabinet as Attorney General. James, 29, was the only one of the John Speed family living in the city at the time, and listed in the 1841 directory. A year before, he had married Jane Cochran, a sister of Gavin and Archie Cochran, and the young couple had a home on Seventh Street between Grayson and Walnut.

CERTAINLY, Lincoln was taken to see the scene of "the Great Fire" in the vicinity of Third and Main Streets. A year before, the city's most extensive and spectacular conflagration had consumed 30 stores at a loss of \$300,000. But now the wreckage was almost all cleared away, and bigger and better buildings were rising to replace the old ones at a rapid rate.

The money panic of 1837 had put an end, for the time, to the building of the new courthouse, but the walls were up and standing gaunt and unfinished on its present site. The city's postoffice was on the northeast corner of Third and Jefferson Streets, and here the business and professional men of the town came once a day, as much to swap news and talk politics, as to pick up the incoming mail.

Lincoln, with his admiration for Henry Clay, must surely have met George D. Prentice, the young editor of The Louisville Journal, who was making a national name for himself. He was an ardent Whig supporter and The Journal's office stood

at the time at Fifth and Main Streets. Nearby was the elegant Louisville Hotel, thronged with travelers disembarking from the river steamers. Farther east on Main Street was the Galt House, the city's biggest and finest hostelry, and the official headquarters of Kentucky Whigs.

We can only hope Lincoln got a glimpse of Jim Porter of Shippingport who, at the time, was driving a hansom cab on Main Street. If he did, his own awkward six feet, four inches were dwarfed by Giant Jim who towered a good foot, five inches above him.

He must surely have seen the new Medical Institute, designed by Gideon Shryock, and recently opened on Chestnut Street at Eighth. Its library of over 3,000 medical books, its up-to-date chemical apparatus, its anatomical theater, "brilliantly lit with illuminating gas" were still a marvel to our citizens. Here more than 200 young men were hard at work learning to be doctors, and here the Speeds' family physician, Lewis Rogers, was soon to become professor of *materia medica* and therapeutics.

The Marine Hospital, on Chestnut Street between Preston and Floyd, had been built a long time, but was still regarded as a handsome building. The old City Theater on Jefferson Street had fallen into disrepute but plans were under way for the

new Louisville Theater which would soon replace it.

If the Speeds took Lincoln to church in town, it was probably to the Unitarian at Fifth and Walnut Streets, where a number of the family were members. Its minister at the time was a young New Englander, Dr. John H. Heywood, who was to marry James Speed's wife's sister, Margaret Cochran. But the city could offer any visitor a wide variety of churches; 21 in all, of eight denominations, stood within a radius of seven blocks of each other in downtown Louisville.

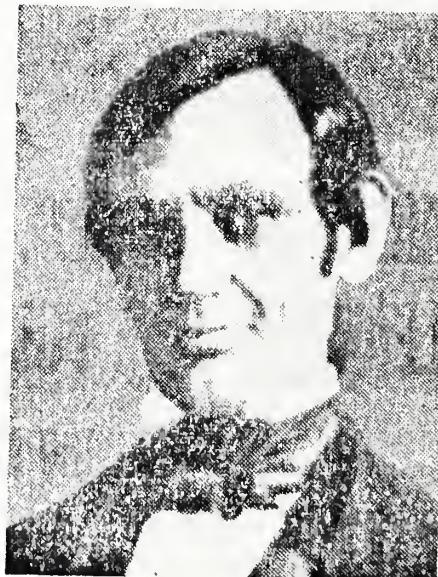
Lincoln, who had struggled for his learning, must have seen as an abundance of riches the Louisville College, with its 80 pupils; the city's 10 academies and 14 schools, with their total attendance of 657 children, learning their three Rs.

**N THOSE PLEASANT WEEKS** he passed at "Farmington," he must have become familiar with names of Louisville families who were friendly with the Speeds—the Prestons, Popes, Prathers, Humphreys, Galtis, Floyds, Thrustons, and many more. He would have known that Frederick Kaye was mayor; Gideon Shryock, city architect; Fortunatus Cosby, superintendent of city schools. He would surely have informed himself that, out of Louisville's 21,300 population, 3,600 were German-born; 1,000 Irish; about 3,300 slaves.

When he went to the dentist—and from his letter to Mary Speed, we know he did go—he had the pick of seven, all pulling teeth within a few blocks of each other. If he needed a toothache remedy, there were plenty of drugstores handy, and in one of them, J. B. Wilder & Company, young Dr. John Bull, who was to become Louisville's first patent medicine millionaire, stood behind the counter dispensing nostrums.

Lincoln must have seen with considerable interest the city's six rope walks and two steam bagging factories. For hemp was one of the principal crops being raised on the Speed plantation. The numerous tobacco factories and warehouses made an impressive sight on Main Street. And on the water's edge, three shipyards were turning out some of the fastest-running boats on the river.

If he flipped through the pages of the city's fourth directory, he saw that Judge John Rowan, who had a law office on Fifth Street, was president of the Kentucky Historical Society; that Daniel Lyon ran a circulating library of over 2,400 volumes; that L. L. Shreve was president of the new Gas Company. And that, at the Galt House, was listed the name of another future American President—"Zachariah Taylor, Gen'l. U. S. Army."



This photograph of Abraham Lincoln was taken within a few years of his visit to Louisville in 1841.



# Lincoln Lore

January, 1979

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Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the  
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Number 1691

## JAMES SPEED, A PERSONALITY INDEED

James Speed, Lincoln's second Attorney General and the brother of his good friend Joshua, is one of the more shadowy figures in Lincoln's official family. Historians often write his appointment to the cabinet off as cronyism, his tenure in office was brief, and no biographer has ever taken up Speed's cause. His grandson, also named James Speed, did publish a volume entitled *James Speed: A Personality* (Louisville: Press of John P. Morton, 1914), which stitched together excerpts from his grandfather's correspondence, but it is adequate only to whet the appetite. Speed was an independent and intelligent man, more astute politically and closer to Lincoln's Republican principles than his brother Joshua. Joshua was a gentleman farmer and a real estate broker; James was a lawyer and a politician, though for most of his life a politician without a constituency.

As early as 1859, when James Speed, like most Southerners, had been driven into the Democratic party for want of any other place to go, he was independent and shrewd enough to realize that Abraham Lincoln posed no real threat to Southern constitutional rights. Lincoln had engaged in a wrangle with Joshua over Republican policies and "Bleeding Kansas" in 1855, but James could write Lincoln four years later and say, "that tho a democrat, I would not have sorrowed at your election to the U.S. Senate — I feel that our rights and institutions would not have been in jeopardy in your hands." By contrast, Joshua, even when he congratulated Lincoln on his nomination for the Presidency in 1860, reminded him that he was "a warm personal friend" but "a political opponent."

James Speed had served one term in the Kentucky Legislature over a decade before the Civil War, but he became so identified with opposition to slavery that he never had a Kentucky constituency again until the war. When he wrote Lincoln in 1859, it was to send him a pamphlet by Louisville's Judge S.S. Nicholas which embodied a bizarre proposal to eliminate the role of political parties in selecting the President. The plan would have

given each state one Presidential elector per million of population. These electors, once chosen, would be divided into six classes and each class would nominate a person. Of these six, two names would be drawn by lot, and the electors would choose which of the two would be President. The other would be Vice-President.

When war broke out, James and Joshua became leaders of pro-Union sentiment and activity in Kentucky. James gained election to the Kentucky Senate. Though he mildly protested General John C. Frémont's emancipation proclamation in Missouri in 1861, James Speed soon introduced a measure in the Kentucky Legislature for confiscation of the estates of rebels. The bill was doomed in part because James introduced

it. "I am regarded as ultra," he told Lincoln, "almost an abolitionist, and of course any thing from me on the subject of slavery is regarded with suspicion." When his bill did not provide for the state to sell confiscated slaves with the rest of confiscated property, legislators asked why. The "state never should sell a human being by my vote," Speed explained. This remark produced "much excitement." "This I have told you," Speed wrote Lincoln, "that you may form some idea of how sensitive our people are upon this subject." Then, characteristically, Speed drew back, telling Lincoln, "You must not infer from what I have said that the pro-slavery feeling in this state is all controlling." There was "a growing hatred of the southern traitors in Kentucky," and this hatred "must soon embrace the institutions" of the Southern traitors.

Joshua Speed was so agitated by Frémont's proclamation that he was "unable to eat or sleep." Though he "and a few others" would be left alone to fight for the Union, the proclamation would essentially "crush out every vestige of a union party in the state." He reminded Lincoln that all "who live in Slave states," whether Unionist or not in sentiment, "have great fear of insurrection." To allow "negroes to be emancipated & remain among us" would have the same ef-



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. James Speed.

fect, he warned, as attacking the freedom of worship or the right to teach children to read in the North. James Speed's protest against the proclamation was much less hysterical and his feelings about slavery more philosophical than Joshua's. By December of 1861, when he wrote Lincoln about his confiscation bill in the Kentucky Senate, James knew that the war was the beginning of the end of slavery. The "great laws of economy" would dictate its abolition by the masters themselves. "The emancipation feeling in Ky," he told Lincoln, "rises & falls with the rise & fall in the price of slaves." The war would "affect, if not destroy their value."

Though not a popular or especially successful politician, James Speed had a good deal of political savvy. Commenting on Simon Cameron's controversial proposal to arm the slaves as soldiers for the Union, Speed noted that Cameron "exhibited the common weakness of talking in advance of action." "Many who condemn what he said," Speed told Lincoln, "would approve the conduct he invites when the case[?] arises for it."

When Lincoln proposed bold antislavery action of his own, Speed was hesitant to recognize the wisdom of his own political knowledge. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation would be a bold stroke, and it would come without elaborate previous discussion. Lincoln apparently read his proposed proclamation to James in July of 1862, at about the same time that his cabinet (and no one else) learned of it. Speed "pondered over the proclamation," but he decided "that it will do no good; most probably much harm." Still trusting the slow workings of economic laws, the Kentuckian argued that the "negro can not be emancipated by proclamation." If the Negro were no party to his own liberation, "he would sink into slavery again" as soon as the external liberating force were removed. In a statement strangely at odds with Joshua's fear of servile insurrection, James said, "If he has not the spirit to strike for freedom, he has not the pride of character to make him keep it when given to him." A sweeping proclamation "would but delude the poor negro, and shock most violently the prejudices of many in the north & nearly all in the south."

Once again, however, James Speed showed his detached view of Southern racial mores. He admitted to Lincoln that "the loyal men of Ky will not be moved by anything that may be done with the negro." Loyalty would thus survive such a proclamation. He concluded with a remark which, though not encouraging Lincoln to issue the proclamation, seemed almost an invitation to servile insurrection: "If the negro is to be free he must strike for it himself." Once Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Speed quickly adjusted to it and noted the adjustment of other Kentuckians. "The negrophobia is nothing like as bad as it was at first," he told Joshua on January 19, 1863. Time was "working wonders."

James Speed's appointment to Lincoln's cabinet late in 1864 was probably more than cronyism on Lincoln's part. Lincoln had discussed slavery with the Kentuckian on several occasions. He knew James Speed's flexibility, philosophical detachment, and independence of judgment. He probably even recognized evidence of greater statesmanship in James than in his old friend Joshua. After Lincoln's death, James quickly became identified with radical Republicanism, and most historians have shown surprise at this turn in the political feelings of a Kentuckian. Lincoln might not have been surprised himself. He knew of James Speed's independence and of his unemotional view of the South's peculiar institution. Even before Lincoln's assassination, James Speed knew very well what would be the sentiments that would govern reconstruction of the South. He told his mother on March 28, 1865, that "many difficulties remain to be settled, and unless the people of the South act wisely and act promptly, great suffering is still in store for them. If they will frankly and fully acknowledge the freedom of the black man and give to him the chance for improvement and elevation, their burden will be greatly lessened." When Abraham Lincoln selected him for his cabinet, he must have known that James Speed was a personality indeed.

## LINCOLN AUTOGRAPHED DEBATES: ABRAHAM JONAS COPY

This, the fifth article in a series on presentation copies of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858*, in

*Illinois*, focuses on one of the best-known copies, the one given to Abraham Jonas. The Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield has owned the book, their only presentation copy of the *Debates*, for many years. Frederick Wells of Minneapolis, the grandson of Jonas, gave the book to that library.

That Lincoln gave Abraham Jonas a copy of his book is a great symbol of the wide range of Lincoln's associations. Jonas was an English Jew. After thirteen years' residence in Kentucky, he moved to Quincy, Illinois, in 1838; there he practiced law and continued his activities as a Mason and a Whig. Doubtless party activities and a mutual friendship with Orville Hickman Browning brought Lincoln and Jonas together at an earlier date, but the first documentary proof of their association is Jonas's letter to Lincoln inviting him to speak in Quincy. Stephen Douglas was coming to help the local candidate in what Jonas figured would be "the warmest contest for Congress that we have ever had in the district." The "Douglasites," Jonas said, "would as soon see old nick here as yourself." Jonas's first loyalties were to Browning and another local Whig, but he supported Lincoln for the Senate in 1855. When Jonas again requested of Lincoln "one of your sledge hammer speeches" in 1858, Lincoln obliged, speaking in Augusta, Illinois, just two days before the famous Freeport debate with Douglas.

Jonas's considerable political abilities (he served as a state representative in both Kentucky and Illinois) were a function of his own speaking abilities. He does not appear to be a great party tactician in his correspondence with Lincoln. In fact, in 1860 he nearly lured Lincoln, unwittingly, into a political trap. On July 20, 1860, he told Lincoln that a Quincy Democratic leader was obtaining affidavits from Irishmen "that they saw you in Quincy come out of a Know Nothing Lodge." Lincoln replied, explaining that he had never been in such a lodge. Lincoln suggested relying on affidavits from local men of prominence to disprove the charge and added "a word of caution": "Our adversaries think they can gain a point, if they could force me to openly deny this charge, by which some degree of offence would be given to the Americans [i.e., Know Nothings]. For this reason, it must not publicly appear that I am paying any attention to the charge."

An interesting aspect of the same exchange of letters is the handling of the delicate question of ethnic prejudice in them. Jonas's letter to Lincoln stated, "I do not know if there is truth in the matter, neither do I care, but thought it best you should know about it." An Englishman by birth and a Jew, Jonas made it clear that his support of Lincoln did not hinge on knowledge that the Railsplitter had never participated in the nativist Know-Nothing movement. Lincoln's reply made it equally clear that he had no qualms about associating with former nativists: "I suppose as good, or even better, men than I may have been in American, or Know-Nothing lodges; but in point of fact, I never was in one, at Quincy, or elsewhere."

When Lincoln was President-elect, Jonas wrote him one of those alarming letters about the possibility of assassination. Jonas had "a very large family connection in the South," including six children in New Orleans. From one of his Southern relations, he had learned of a "perfect organization" of "desperate characters" to prevent Lincoln's inauguration, even "by using violence on the person of Lincoln." He recommended that free-state governors and Lincoln's friends take precautions because "no protection can be expected from the damned old traitor at the head of the Government [James Buchanan] or his subordinates." If Lincoln replied to this letter, it has not been found.

Jonas's Southern connections made his family one of those divided by the Civil War. Four of his sons fought for the Confederacy. When he was on his deathbed in 1864, Browning influenced Lincoln to allow one of Jonas's sons, then a prisoner in Union hands, to be released temporarily to pay a last visit to his father. Lincoln had been solicitous of Jonas's desires all along, appointing him — again because of a suggestion from Browning — postmaster in Quincy. When Jonas died, Lincoln made his widow postmistress there.

The Abraham Jonas copy of the *Debates* is an important relic of this interesting friendship. Lincoln students owe Jonas a debt for another reason. When Lincoln replied to Jonas's letter requesting a copy of the book, he stated that the publisher had not yet printed them but that Jonas would receive one of the one hundred copies the publisher promised Lincoln personally. This letter is our way of knowing that Lincoln had a hundred copies to give away.

*Editor's Note:* The Jonas letters to Lincoln are in the

Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. I have quoted from the following: Jonas to Lincoln, September 16, 1854; July 30, 1858; July 20, 1860; and December 30, 1860.

Further information on Jonas is available in Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951).

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS: "STRONG'S DIME CARICATURES"

FIGURES 2-5 (below). The Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum recently purchased a series of four poster cartoons published by Thomas W. Strong of New York in 1861. Strong was a prolific producer of prints, noted especially for being the first employer of Louis Maurer, the genius behind the early political cartoons of Currier &

Ives. Harry T. Peters in *America on Stone* noted a strain of originality in the work of Strong's firm, and the series of four "Dime Caricatures" pictured here certainly reveal a taste for good workmanship and for variety in political cartooning. The caricatures must have been printed about March, 1861. All deal with the secession crisis. The Lincoln cartoon has been pictured in Rufus Rockwell Wilson's *Lincoln in Caricature*, but Wilson did not note that the cartoon was part of a series or publish the others in the series.

STRONG'S DIME CARICATURES.—No. 1.



DOMESTIC TROUBLES.

From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

STRONG'S DIME CARICATURES.—No. 2.



LITTLE BO-PEEP AND HER FOOLISH SHEEP.

From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

\* Little Bo-peep, she lost her sheep,  
And didn't know where to find 'em.

Let 'em alone, and they'll all come home,  
With their tails hanging down behind 'em.



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

## GOSSIP ABOUT LINCOLN.

Why He Inherited Poverty and Obscurity Instead of Some Property and an Established Residence.

### The Speeds and the Todds, and Their Influences and Traces Upon the President.

The very singular story recently published for the first time touching the alleged insanity for a brief period of Abraham Lincoln, seems, in the light of facts since brought to light, to be wholly untrue. The value of these later facts is much enhanced that they were not brought forward to disprove the story, but had been written long before that was made public, and appeared in the course of the narrative of Lincoln's life by John Nicolay and John Hay. The statement of Judge Nelson that Lincoln was insane through unrequited love, and was confined for some months in an asylum, is not borne out by the records. The Life of Lincoln accounts for him during all the period when he was depressed and melancholy for love, and the only foundation for the story that he was incarcerated in a Kentucky asylum, is the fact that he came to this State with his friend, Joshua F. Speed, and spent several weeks with him near this city. It appears from the Life that Mr. Speed was in a condition of mind not very widely different from that of his friend, and which, after all, is not unusual in young men with something in them who, living in sparse communities, find their emotional and intellectual inclinations in conflict; and it is not surprising that these two young men, both typical of pioneer strength, courage and manhood, should recover. That Lincoln was able to bear the enormous strain of the war responsibility and the unhappy burdens that his married life afterward laid upon him, is proof enough that his mind was not of the kind to scatter under such a test as unrequited love offers. One of the remarkable facts of his career was that he seemed steadily to grow to every demand made upon him, and his mind broadened and his philosophy grew firmer every year of his life. Joshua Speed had the same experience. Without Lincoln's political inclinations, he had a nature and a mind equally vigorous, strong and fruitful. He was practical where Lincoln was speculative; he was full of active initiation where Lincoln was emotional. Their long and unbroken intimacy can be accounted for upon that ground—that they supplemented and completed each other.

The Speeds are notably a strong family that have impressed themselves upon their surroundings everywhere. It is difficult to find Speeds anywhere who do not amount to something, but this particular branch is worthy of special remark. We find Joshua instinctively picking out as his first confidential friend this dreaming young Western lawyer who was to become the most conspicuous President after Washington. His brother James ultimately became Attorney General of the United States under that President—not entirely because he was the brother of Joshua, perhaps; but if he did, then he is all the more worthy of honor that his conspicuous ability as a lawyer and his sound counsel as an advisory friend rendered his service of distinguished value to the President and the country. There are peculiarities about the Speeds, one that it might be a good idea to adopt for a common trait. It must have been a very strong original direction that could send the strong, enterprising and tenacious quality of that family down the long descent not noticeably diverted by the fresh influxes from marriages by the way. The Speeds in this community are recognized for their strength of purpose, their activity of mind and vigorous successes. There is not one of them who has not impressed himself upon his surroundings and is not possessed of an individuality that, after all, is about the only thing that is satisfactory to proper pride.

Joshua Speed's readiness to take the initiative and act prudently but courageously, and to hold on tenaciously, seems to be still a notable quality in all the descendants. Such families as this are more to a community than material wealth. They compose the character, the conscience and the will of the community.

Though Mr. Lincoln was not insane, the mental aberration that affected his wife was one of the most painful of misfortunes. The cause of her flighty conduct upon important occasions was never fully understood until steps were taken to establish her mental unsoundness. There was an unusual streak in the family, and it has never been accounted for. Her father, for many years prominent in the public life of Kentucky, Clerk of the House for several terms, was an excellent man. The children were the result of his second marriage. Mrs. Lincoln had two brothers, one of them George Rogers Clark Todd and Levi Todd. There are a number of men in Kentucky with white heads who went to school with the two brothers at Lexington and Frankfort. With anything like ability they might have left names, for the stirring career in which their brother-in-law was engaged made numberless opportunities. The only use that George Rogers Clark Todd made of his education, however, was to borrow money upon the strength of it and to disappear from Cincinnati, where he was practicing medicine, leaving a cloud of debts and questionable transactions behind him, and a deserted wife. He died somewhere, but nobody seems to know what became of him. The other brother Levi sank into the obscurity of hopeless dissipation, and died without having achieved anything.

It is interesting to know that the two Presidents who will live longest in history were both influenced in their lives by the oppressions of England—Washington, as any other American citizen of his time, by the unmitigated hardships of colonial despotism; Lincoln by the relic of one of the most unnatural laws—that of primogeniture. Lincoln's family origin was buried in obscurity for some years, for the reason that the unquestionably poor and struggling Thomas Lincoln, his father, was at first presumed to be one of the "poor white trash" so distinctly known in the old slave States. His poverty and his migrations snapped off all connections, and it was only the discovery of the marriage license and record establishing the President's legitimacy that stirred up the almost forgotten facts. The existence of this record, by the way, was first brought to light through the efforts of Judge H. J. Brown, of this city, who announced them in a letter to the *New York Tribune*. It provoked considerable correspondence and the suggestion that Abraham Lincoln was the son of Mordecai, and not of Thomas Lincoln. Then it was discovered that Lincoln's grandmother, Abraham Lincoln, or Linkhorn, was killed the day before the Virginia Legislature repealed the law of primogeniture. In consequence of this, Mordecai, the oldest son, inherited all the estate, which was a very comfortable one for that day. The younger son, who was to be the father of the great President, had nothing but a feeble constitution and something of natural inertness upon which to accumulate the misfortunes and hard-hips that attended him through life. The land which he cultivated in a poor way in Kentucky was probably given to him by his elder brother. If old pioneer Abraham Linkhorn had not been killed until the next day, who knows what changes the delay might have worked upon the destinies, not only of his sons and grandsons, but upon the millions of men who lived in the United States when the storm of 1861 began to howl? YOUNG E. ALLISON.

Sept 11, 1841

Stover is the cur. of the  
state. I would willingly adopt any  
feasible plan to be rid of it.

James Speer.

You can make the

The Sabbath is a day of rest —  
not a day of self-indulgence and  
stainless mirthfulness.

James Speer

Joshua born Nov 14 1814

Capt James Speed 1782

Capt Allen Smith 1782

P

Tanyler built about

1809

Stone Barn

Skew House

From Barn on left went for needs

From Street

b. March 11, 1812 Sommeh

graduated at T.U.

began practice 1833

By Boston 1847

John Speer

June 9 Tangerton 1812

swellby slaves on  
6 boys 5 girls

At first there were usually 6 boys  
number of the rest by accident  
with power to increase.

"Each Sunday morning the year around, before  
(dinner)  
going to church, they would meet for an hour or two  
with their mother at her door on the southwest  
corner of English and Washington to have a corsoy game ~~about~~.

Speer P 17

(James Speer a ~~personality~~)

James Speer a friend  
an author

Smaller abet twigs fuller at Tremont also, small  
See : L. in year 1841 p 90

